

# The Charter School East Dulwich

Southampton Way, London SE5 7EW

## Inspection dates

16–17 October 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders, governors and trustees have quickly established a school with high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave. They are committed to improving the life chances of pupils who are disadvantaged.
- Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. They value the leadership provided by the headteacher, as do the staff.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum which balances very effectively teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science with the humanities, the arts and technical subjects.
- Pupils' experiences are enhanced by the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that are provided at the end of the school day.
- Much of the teaching is of good quality. Teachers have used their strong subject knowledge to design a curriculum which is challenging and promotes a high degree of knowledge acquisition.
- The large majority of pupils make good progress and are attaining well. Some pupils excel. This is because the good teaching pupils receive is complemented by effective systems of behaviour management.
- Pupils' behave well in lessons and around the school. Leaders ensure that pupils are safe and feel safe.
- Members of the senior leadership team, the local governing body and trustees have a good understanding of the school's strengths and remaining areas for development.
- Leaders' views on the quality of teaching are accurate. Occasionally, however, their scrutiny of teaching practice does not focus sufficiently on the impact of teaching on the experiences and learning of different groups of pupils.
- Teachers' skills in providing learning which meets the needs of different groups of pupils are variable. As a result, sometimes pupils find the work either too easy or too hard. Not all teachers use assessment systematically to check the learning and understanding of the whole group. The promotion of high standards of literacy across the curriculum is inconsistent.
- Some teaching does not meet the needs of lower-attaining pupils or pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities well enough.
- Strategies to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development, their understanding of fundamental British values and aspects of their careers education are underdeveloped.
- The school's website does not meet all aspects of statutory guidance or the requirements set out in the school's funding agreement.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - sharing more widely the strong practice that exists in the school in promoting pupils' curiosity and creativity and in consolidating and deepening pupils' knowledge
  - securing greater consistency in teachers' use of assessment, including through questioning, so that they become more skilled in identifying, systematically, which pupils need extra help and which pupils need to be challenged more
  - ensuring that all teachers have the skills they need to meet the needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
  - ensuring greater consistency in the way teachers promote high standards of literacy among pupils.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - sharpening the monitoring of teaching by ensuring that due attention is given to evaluating the impact of teaching on the learning of different groups of pupils
  - devising and implementing more systematic approaches to promoting and securing pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and their understanding of fundamental British values
  - ensuring provision for careers education is implemented systematically and reflects the Department for Education's raised expectations, as articulated by the Gatsby benchmarks and the Technical and Further Education Act 2017
  - ensuring the school's website includes all the information set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance and the school's funding agreement.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, governors and trustees are ambitious for the pupils in their care. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how pupils should behave. Leaders are driven by their ambition that disadvantage should not be a barrier to pupils' learning, attainment and success in later life.
- Leaders have quickly secured the support of parents. Of the 122 parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View survey, 95% said they would recommend the school. Many commented on their confidence in the leadership provided by the headteacher.
- The school's curriculum is ambitious in intent. Leaders are committed to promoting scholarly excellence in the school through the challenging, knowledge-rich curriculum they have devised with their teaching staff. Much thought has gone into crafting good-quality enquiry questions that aim to ensure that pupils are curious, creative and confident. Leaders ensure that the curriculum balances provision in the core subjects with opportunities for pupils to study the humanities, the arts and technical subjects.
- The curriculum is enriched by a much broader range of extra-curricular activities than is usually seen. As well as a wide range of music and sports activities, the school provides after-school opportunities for pupils to study Mandarin and Latin, and to develop their skills and interests in areas such as photography, bicycle maintenance and circus skills. Leaders are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity so that all pupils can participate in their chosen activities during the course of the year, including those which are heavily oversubscribed.
- Leaders have recruited committed teaching staff at a time of significant teacher shortage. The school is fully staffed with subject specialists in all areas of the curriculum. Staff share senior leaders' ambition. Teachers have worked well together to identify strategies to help improve and refine aspects of their teaching practice.
- While the curriculum is ambitious and rooted in intellectual rigour, it is not implemented consistently well. This is because leaders have not yet ensured that all staff have the necessary skills to meet pupils' diverse needs. Hence, leaders' high ambitions for the pupils are not realised as successfully as they intend.
- Leaders recognise some of the weaker aspects of practice identified by inspectors. However, their evaluation of the school's effectiveness is overgenerous. This is because they have placed much weight on the assessment information they draw from tests to satisfy themselves that all groups of pupils are making good progress. The day-to-day monitoring of teaching has not been probing enough to identify some of the weaknesses in pupils' learning over time that were identified during the inspection.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strengthening as the specialist team grows in experience. Nevertheless, the support provided in classrooms for pupils who have additional needs is too variable. A few parents expressed concerns that their children's needs are not met consistently.
- Leaders give a high profile to raising the achievement of pupils from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. They have used the additional funding provided to

support these pupils appropriately. Their analysis of these pupils' specific barriers to learning and the impact of the spending is not precise enough, however. Leaders have not ensured that a statement about their use of the additional funding provided to support lower-attaining Year 7 pupils is provided on the school's website, as is required.

- Leaders have created a culture in which pupils are mostly respectful to each other and towards staff. Pupils described an assembly where they had been taught the importance of respecting differences rather than merely tolerating them. However, strategies to ensure that all pupils understand fundamental British values are not as effective as they could be. Similarly, while the school's provision for enrichment makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development, strategies to promote their wider spiritual, moral and social awareness are not well enough developed.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that the school's careers programme reflects recent changes to government guidance. A new post-holder is working towards remedying this.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors and trustees have established a school which is highly valued by parents. They have drawn on the strengths of the other school in the trust, while ensuring that the school has developed its own identity, vision and values.
- Most aspects of trustees' and the local governing body's work are effective. Clear lines of accountability ensure that trustees and governors are very clear about the purpose of the respective roles.
- Governors visit the school regularly to satisfy themselves that the information that leaders provide is accurate. They are supported in this by the highly experienced chief executive officer, who previously was the headteacher of an outstanding secondary school.
- Governors maintain oversight of the additional funding provided to the school to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, those whose attainment on entry is low and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They have not, however, ensured that the school adheres to statutory guidance or the conditions of its funding agreement regarding the provision of information on the school's website.
- The minutes of meetings of the governing body and trust do not always convey sufficient probing of information provided by senior staff. In discussions with inspectors, however, governors demonstrated that they have good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Governors maintain strong oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school's policies and procedures are thorough and reflect the most recent statutory guidance. Record-keeping is also thorough, including records of the checks made on staff's suitability to work with children. Referrals are supported effectively by an easy-

to-use online form for reporting concerns. Leaders follow up referrals tenaciously, working closely with local and central government.

- All staff have copies of safeguarding documents and understand how to use these to identify pupils who are experiencing problems. Training for staff is thorough and linked to the school's analysis of need. This ensures that all staff remain watchful of pupils and that they keep up to date with current safeguarding issues.
- Pupils are clear that they feel safe in school and that they know who to talk to if they have a problem. The school gives pupils appropriate advice about how to keep themselves safe outside school. Some pupils talked sensibly about knife crime and how to avoid problems. Others, however, were worried about the journey to and from school. Leaders are aware of this and provide teaching on how to stay safe in the local area.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Learning takes place in an atmosphere that is mostly respectful, purposeful and productive.
- Inspectors' visits to classrooms, together with the scrutiny of pupils' work over time, showed that the large majority of teaching is of good quality, including in English, mathematics and science.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to focus lessons around well-crafted enquiry questions designed to promote pupils' curiosity and deepen their knowledge.
- Most teaching results in good levels of engagement and leads to pupils being well motivated.
- In one highly effective mathematics activity seen in Year 8, for example, pupils applied their new learning by trying to talk about negative numbers for a minute without hesitation, repetition or deviation. Though the pupils found this difficult, the activity made clear how much they had learned and highlighted any misconceptions. Their high level of motivation and determination to succeed was palpable.
- Similarly, high levels of motivation were seen in a Year 7 French activity. Skilful teaching, which combined repetition of key points and good-quality questioning with high-quality teaching resources, resulted in pupils speaking in French with confidence, precision and enthusiasm.
- Teachers are skilled in promoting pupils' use of precise subject-specific language. This helps secure high levels of attainment for many pupils.
- In some sessions, teaching strategies fail to capture pupils' interest effectively. In these activities, only a small minority of the class respond to their teachers' questioning and occasionally, pupils become lethargic, with one or two even putting their head on their desk.
- Sometimes, teachers do not use assessment systematically enough to check that different groups of pupils are ready to move on to the next task.
- The work in pupils' books showed that some pupils, usually with low prior attainment or those who have SEN and/or disabilities, fail to complete work in some of their

classes. When this happens, teachers do not take additional steps to find out why or to help pupils catch up.

- While the most able pupils often achieve very well, a small minority of pupils – and their parents – reported that they are not challenged consistently well. Inspectors share this view.
- The school’s strategies to promote high standards of literacy are not fully effective. Good systems have been implemented, for example to boost pupils’ confidence in using scholarly language and in organising their thinking. However, teachers do not routinely insist that pupils use accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar or present their work neatly. Some lower-attaining pupils continue to present their work poorly, in part because their difficulties in handwriting have not been addressed.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils told inspectors they feel safe in school. They learn how to manage risks through assemblies and through the school’s provision for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education which includes teaching on how to stay safe and be healthy. Some pupils reported, however, that these lessons are not always delivered effectively.
- Incidents of bullying are infrequent. All of the pupils who spoke with inspectors were able to identify an adult in school they would approach if they needed support.
- Leaders have put in place a range of strategies to support pupils’ mental health, including through mentoring, counselling and teaching. Some pupils told inspectors that they would like more teaching about this aspect of their well-being.
- Pupils reported that the school has a strong sense of community. Year 9 pupils told inspectors that they are proud to be the first cohort to join the school. Pupils are, of course, excited at the prospect of moving to their new, purpose-built premises.
- Pupils’ education is enriched by their participation in the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that are provided. This enhances their cultural development, broadens their knowledge and equips them with new skills.
- Pupils are respectful of difference and reported that incidents of name-calling relating to race or religion are rare. A few pupils reported that they sometimes hear homophobic language, however.
- Pupils’ awareness of fundamental British values is not as strong as it could be. While some Year 9 pupils speak confidently about the principles of a democratic society, for example, others in Year 9 are unable to describe fully what democracy means.
- A range of careers provision is in place. Pupils told inspectors that they value this but that they would like more guidance on the steps they need towards their career goals, as well as the information about jobs and careers that is provided. The school’s careers strategy is underdeveloped.

- Not all pupils demonstrate the curiosity and creativity that leaders aspire to for them. Sometimes, the mode of lesson delivery curtails rather than promotes their curiosity, creativity and confidence.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils arrive punctually to school and to lessons, and most bring the equipment they need, including their books, pens and kit.
- In most lessons pupils behave well. Strict routines have been established and are adhered to by most pupils in almost all lessons.
- A significant minority of pupils expressed frustration about the consistency and fairness in the way the school's behaviour policy is implemented, however. Inspection evidence showed that the school's systems are very effective in securing good behaviour but that there is further work to do remedy pupils' perceptions or their experiences of behaviour management.
- The school's work to support pupils who find it more difficult to manage their behaviour is effective. The new behaviour team, established this term, is already making a difference by strengthening this aspect of the school's work further. Pupils value the contribution to the school that these specialist staff are making.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in corridors and in the playground. They have coped well with the limited space available in the school's temporary premises. Leaders acknowledge that not all pupils, particularly those in Year 9, demonstrate the maturity and self-confidence they would like. They are working to build on the existing opportunities for leadership to help pupils become more confident and self-assured learners and citizens.
- Pupils' attendance is consistently above the national average. The attendance of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is close to that of other pupils in the school. Few pupils are persistently absent.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The large majority of pupils are learning well and making good progress, including in English, mathematics and science. Some pupils are excelling. Opportunities for pupils to devise and complete an annual independent learning project have resulted in some highly impressive pieces of work.
- Leaders have devised a carefully conceived system of assessment to monitor how well pupils are achieving and attaining. However, though the school's assessment records indicate that almost all pupils are making good or better progress, the quality of work seen in classrooms and in pupils' books indicates that pupils' progress is more variable than assessment information suggests. In discussions, pupils' views about how well they are achieving were mixed.

- The most able pupils achieve well. Evidence from their books shows that they are not always stretched and challenged sufficiently, however, including in English and mathematics.
- The progress of some pupils with low starting points and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is variable. This is because teaching is not consistently adapted well enough to meet their differing needs.
- The school's assessment records show that disadvantaged pupils are achieving as well as others in the school, though their current attainment is lower. Visits to classrooms and scrutiny of pupils' books show that there are similar inconsistencies in their progress as in that of other pupils in the school.
- Specific interventions to improve standards in reading in those who need the most support have made a difference and, for a small minority, led to significant improvements in their reading ages. Too many of the lower- and some of the middle-attaining pupils make basic spelling and punctuation errors, however.
- Reading is promoted through the daily silent-reading sessions provided in school. However, leaders do not assess whether this approach is successfully fostering pupils' love of reading or raising attainment. Teachers do not routinely ensure that pupils make the most of this time. A few pupils told inspectors that they open their books in these sessions but do not read.



## School details

Unique reference number	142178
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10058923

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Derek Hill
Headteacher	Alex Crossman
Telephone number	020 3873 2290
Website	<a href="http://www.chartereastdulwich.org.uk/">www.chartereastdulwich.org.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@chartereastdulwich.org.uk">office@chartereastdulwich.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2016 with its first intake of Year 7 pupils. It has grown each year, and currently provides education for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Pupils currently in Year 9 will progress to Year 10 in September 2019, and the school's sixth form will open in September 2021.
- The school is currently located in temporary accommodation. It will relocate to its new, purpose-built premises in December 2018.
- The school is part of The Charter Schools Educational Trust. The trust sets the strategic direction of the school and is responsible for its overall performance. Considerable powers are delegated to a local governing body.
- Pupils come from diverse backgrounds and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average.

- The proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals at any time in the last six years is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is broadly average. More pupils than average are in receipt of SEN school support.
- No pupils currently attend alternative provision or any off-site provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a wide range of subjects across all year groups. Most classroom visits were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in most of the lessons they visited and separately with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held formal meetings with different groups of pupils and spoke to pupils in lessons and during lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders and teachers. Inspectors also met with trustees, members of the local governing body and the trust's chief executive officer.
- Inspectors took account of the 122 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 113 comments from parents made through the Ofsted free text service. They also considered the 12 responses to the online pupil questionnaire and the 32 responses from the online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, records related to attendance, behaviour and safety and the school's analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. They also scrutinised the school's records of checks made on the quality of teaching and records of training for staff. They considered the minutes of meetings of the local governing body and trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website.

## Inspection team

Daniel Burton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Brian Oppenheim	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Rodin	Ofsted Inspector
David Bromfield	Ofsted Inspector

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